connector is a plug 26 with a protruding post 27 that fits inside the connector 24 and extends into the hollow shaft. The post 27 is solid and thereby blocks flow through the connector and holds a vacuum in the underlying vacuum chamber when the connector is not in use. The interior of the plug (not visible in the Figure) has the same connecting features as the male LUER-type connector that is included at the tip of a column or syringe. The outer surface 28 of the plug may be ridged or knurled to facilitate gripping and twisting by the user's thumb and forefinger.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claim 2 and amend claims 1 and 3 as shown in the followed clean versions of these claims. Marked versions of these claims showing the changes made by this amendment are attached hereto as Appendix B.

1. (amended) A vacuum manifold for interchangeably accommodating a multi-well plate and one or a plurality of individual chromatography columns each terminating in a male portion of a male-female-type air-tight manually engageable connector, said vacuum manifold comprising:

a plate perforated with a plurality of through-passages, each through-passage having embedded therein a female portion of said male-female-type air-tight manually operable connector;

a plurality of individually removable plugs, each said plug shaped to mate with one of said female portions to form a substantially airtight closure of said through-passage; and

a receptacle with an open top and a port for drawing a partial vacuum in said receptacle, said receptacle containing an internal shoulder encircling said open top and sized to receive said plate.

3. (amended) An adapter for a vacuum manifold, which manifold is designed to produce vacuum-induced flow through all wells of a multi-well laboratory